

Applicants : Thomas A. McDonald et al  
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**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in this application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended) In a rain gutter debris guard having an inclined top cap with a rearward portion extending along an associated roof, a medial portion extending over an interior portion of an associated gutter, and a curved forward portion extending adjacent to a front lip portion of the gutter, the improvement of a universal end cap comprising:

a generally flat, rigid cover panel having an upper edge, a lower edge, and opposite side edges, and including:

a substantially rectangular lower portion sized to extend over either one of the opposite ends of said rain gutter debris guard and the gutter, and being severable to custom fit said end cap to a wide variety of different gutters; and

a pair of curved nose portions projecting outwardly from the opposite side edges of said cover panel adjacent said upper edge thereof, and configured to close off the curved forward portion of said top cap at either one of the opposite ends thereof;

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a mounting flange extending along at least a portion of the upper edge of said cover panel, and extending laterally inwardly in a generally perpendicular relationship with said cover panel for attachment to said top cap at either end of the gutter; and

a retainer means for fastening said mounting flange to said top cap at either one of the opposite ends thereof, such that said end cap encloses one of the opposite ends of said rain gutter debris guard to prevent debris from entering between the adjacent ends of the gutter and said rain gutter debris guard.

Claim 2 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said end cap has a one-piece construction, wherein said mounting flange is formed integrally with said cover panel.

Claim 3 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 2, wherein:

said end cap is constructed from sheet metal to facilitate custom fitting said end cap to said rain gutter debris guard.

Claim 4 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 3, wherein:

said mounting flange includes at least one vertically extending fastener formed aperture therethrough.

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Claim 5 (currently amended) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 4, wherein:

said retainer means includes at least one screw extending through said fastener formed aperture and into said top cap.

Claim 6 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 5, wherein:

said upper edge of said cover panel is generally straight, and disposed substantially parallel with the lower edge of said cover panel.

Claim 7 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 6, wherein:

said opposite side edges of said cover panel at said lower portion thereof are generally parallel, and oriented substantially perpendicular to said upper edge and said lower edge of said cover panel.

Claim 8 (currently amended) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 7, wherein:

said retainer means attaches said end cap to said medial portion of said top cap.

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Claim 9 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 8, wherein:

said cover panel includes opposite lower corners which extend diagonally between said side edges and said lower edge.

Claim 10 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 9, wherein:

said top cap is generally imperforate to direct rainwater around said curved forward portion thereof into the interior of the gutter.

Claim 11 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 10, wherein:

said curved forward portion of said top cap is shaped to extend beyond the front lip portion of the gutter to sweep rainwater into the interior portion of the gutter and deflect debris therefrom.

Claim 12 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 11, wherein:

said rearward portion of said top cap is shaped for insertion under adjacent roof shingles.

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Claim 13 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 12, including:

at least one mounting bracket shaped for reception within the interior of the gutter, and supporting said top cap.

Claim 14 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 13, wherein:

said top cap is supported solely on said mounting bracket, such that said rain gutter debris guard does not penetrate or damage the roof shingles.

Claim 15 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said end cap is constructed from sheet metal to facilitate custom fitting said end cap to said rain gutter debris guard.

Claim 16 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said mounting flange includes at least one vertically extending fastener formed aperture therethrough.

Claim 17 (currently amended) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said retainer means includes at least one screw extending through said mounting flange and into said top cap.

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Claim 18 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said top cap is generally imperforate to direct rainwater around said curved forward portion thereof into the interior of the gutter.

Claim 19 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said upper edge of said cover panel is generally straight, and disposed substantially parallel with the lower edge of said cover panel.

Claim 20 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said opposite side edges of said cover panel at said lower portion thereof are generally parallel, and oriented substantially perpendicular to said upper end and said lower edge of said cover panel.

Claim 21 (currently amended) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said retainer means attaches said end cap to said medial portion of said top cap.

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Claim 22 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, including:

at least one mounting bracket shaped for reception within the interior of the gutter, and supporting said top cap.

Claim 23 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said curved forward portion of said top cap is shaped to extend beyond the front lip portion of the gutter to sweep rainwater into the interior portion of the gutter and deflect debris therefrom.

Claim 24 (original) A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said rearward portion of said top cap is shaped for insertion under adjacent roof shingles; and

said top cap is supported solely on said rain gutter debris guard, such that said rain gutter debris guard does not penetrate or damage the roof shingles.

Claim 25 (currently amended) A rain gutter debris guard, comprising:

an inclined top cap with a rearward portion extending along an associated roof, a medial portion extending over an interior portion of an associated gutter, and a curved forward portion extending adjacent to a front lip portion of the gutter;

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a universal end cap, having:

a generally flat, rigid cover panel with an upper edge, a lower edge, and opposite side edges, and including a substantially rectangular lower portion sized to extend over either one of the opposite ends of said rain gutter debris guard and the gutter, and being severable to custom fit said end cap to a wide variety of different gutters, and a pair of curved nose portions projecting outwardly from the opposite side edges of said cover panel adjacent said upper edge thereof, and configured to close off the curved forward portion of said top cap at either one of the opposite ends thereof;

a mounting flange extending along at least a portion of the upper edge of said cover panel, and extending laterally inwardly in a generally perpendicular relationship with said cover panel for attachment to said top cap at either end of the gutter; and

a retainer means for fastening said mounting flange to said top cap at either one of the opposite ends thereof, such that said end cap encloses one of the opposite ends of said rain gutter debris guard to prevent debris from entering between the adjacent ends of the gutter and said rain gutter debris guard.



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Claim 26 (currently amended)      A universal end cap for rain gutter debris guards of the type having an inclined top cap with a rearward portion extending along an associated roof, a medial portion extending over an interior portion of an associated gutter, and a curved forward portion extending adjacent to a front lip portion of the gutter; said universal end cap comprising:

    a generally flat, rigid cover panel having an upper edge, a lower edge, and opposite side edges, and including:

        a substantially rectangular lower portion sized to extend over either one of the opposite ends of the rain gutter debris guard and the gutter, and being severable to custom fit said end cap to a wide variety of different gutters; and

        a pair of curved nose portions projecting outwardly from the opposite side edges of said cover panel adjacent said upper edge thereof, and configured to close off the curved forward portion of the top cap at either one of the opposite ends thereof;

        a mounting flange extending along at least a portion of the upper edge of said cover panel, and extending laterally inwardly in a generally perpendicular relationship with said cover panel for attachment to the top cap at either end of the gutter; and

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a retainer means for fastening said mounting flange to the top cap at either one of the opposite ends thereof, such that said end cap encloses one of the opposite ends of the rain gutter debris guard to prevent debris from entering between the adjacent ends of the gutter and the rain gutter debris guard.

Claim 27 (currently amended)      A method for deflecting debris ~~and the like~~ from rain gutters ~~of the type~~ having a generally trough-shaped interior, and a front lip, comprising:

providing a top cap having a rearward portion thereof shaped to extend along an associated roof, a medial portion thereof shaped to extend over the interior of the gutter and a forward portion thereof shaped to extend adjacent the front lip of the gutter;

providing at least one mounting bracket, ~~each~~ having a rearward portion thereof shaped to abut a rear wall of the gutter, and an upper portion thereof shaped to support the top cap to deflect debris from the interior of the gutter;

attaching of the rearward portion of the mounting bracket to the rear wall of the gutter and adjacent roof fascia;

attaching the top cap to the upper portion of the mounting bracket, such that the top cap overlies the interior of the gutter to deflect debris therefrom;

providing at least one universal end cap having a generally flat, rigid cover panel with an upper edge, a lower edge, and opposite side edges, as well as a substantially rectangular

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lower portion sized to extend over either one of the opposite ends of the gutter, and being severable to custom fit the end cap to a wide variety of different gutters, a pair of curved nose portions projecting outwardly from the opposite side edges of the cover panel adjacent the upper edge thereof to close off the curved forward portion of the top cap at either one of the opposite ends thereof, and a mounting flange extending along at least a portion of the upper edge of the cover panel, and extending laterally inwardly in a generally perpendicular relationship with the cover panel for attachment to the top cap at either end of the gutter; fastening the mounting flange of the universal end cap to the top cap at either one of the opposite ends thereof, such that the universal end cap encloses the space between the adjacent ends of the gutter and top cap to prevent debris from entering therebetween.

Claim 28 (new)      A rain gutter debris guard as set forth in claim 1, wherein:  
said retainer means includes at least one rivet extending into said top cap.